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Security Council

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Statement by the President of the Security Council

At the 5718th meeting of the Security Council, held on 17 July 2007, in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "The situation in Afghanistan", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council welcomes recent international initiatives aimed at enhancing security, stability and development in Afghanistan, including: the annual Afghanistan Development Forum (ADF), followed by a meeting of the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board (JCMB), on 29-30 April; the meeting of Foreign Ministers of the G8 with the Foreign Ministers of Afghanistan and Pakistan in Potsdam, on 30 May, which adopted a Joint Statement on the promotion of cooperation and assistance through mutual consultation and agreement, including follow-up projects in areas such as refugees repatriation and economic development on both sides of the border; the Conference on 'DIAG (Disbandment of Illegal Armed Groups) for the Stabilization of Afghanistan: Coordination with the Police Reform' in Tokyo, co-chaired by Afghanistan, Japan and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), on 21 June; the 'Rome Conference on the Rule of Law in Afghanistan', co-chaired by the Governments of Afghanistan and Italy and the Secretary-General of the United Nations, on 2-3 July, which agreed on measures to enhance Afghan and international commitment to justice sector reform, as outlined in the Chairs' Conclusions and the Joint Recommendations of the Conference, and called for a follow-up meeting in Kabul this October. The Security Council encourages all relevant parties to ensure full and timely implementation of the outcomes of these events.

"The Council reaffirms its strong commitment to the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of Afghanistan. The Security Council also reaffirms the central and impartial role that the United Nations continues to play in promoting peace and stability in Afghanistan by leading the efforts of the international community. The Council welcomes, in this regard, the participation and contribution of the United Nations Secretary-General to various initiatives on Afghanistan, as well as his visit to the country on 29 June.

"The Security Council notes that these developments reinforce the progress made in pursuing a comprehensive approach to the security, governance and development of Afghanistan, on the basis of the Afghanistan

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Compact and the Afghan National Development Strategy. The Security Council emphasizes that the strengthening of Afghan institutions, the advancement of regional cooperation, sustained economic and social development, and the fight against international terrorism, as well as against opium cultivation, production and trafficking remain key factors to achieve sustainable peace, stability and development in Afghanistan.

"The Security Council reiterates its support for the continuing endeavours by the Afghan Government, with the assistance of the international community, including the International Security Assistance Force and the Operation Enduring Freedom coalition, to further improve the security situation and to continue to address the threat posed by the Taliban, Al-Qaida and other extremist groups. The Security Council condemns in the strongest terms all suicide attacks against civilians and Afghan and international forces and their destabilizing effects on the security and stability of Afghanistan, as well as the use by the Taliban and other extremist groups of civilians as human shields. The Council deeply regrets all losses sustained by the local population, the national security forces and international military and civilian personnel. The Security Council expresses its concern about all civilian casualties and reiterates its call for all feasible steps to be taken to ensure the protection of civilian life and for international humanitarian and human rights law to be upheld. The Council stresses the importance of continued cooperation between international security forces and the Afghan Authorities, inter alia to promote awareness of local culture and traditions, which is useful in the implementation of their tasks. The Council stresses the role of UNAMA to continue to contribute to human rights protection, including monitoring of the situation of civilians in armed conflict.

"The Security Council expresses its concern at the serious harm that increasing opium cultivation, production and trafficking causes to the security, development and governance of Afghanistan as well as to the region and internationally, and calls on the Afghan Government, with the assistance of the international community, to pursue effective implementation of the National Drug Control Strategy. The Security Council welcomes the efforts undertaken by the United Nations Office for Drugs and Crimes (UNODC) to promote border management cooperation in drug control between Afghanistan and its neighbours. The Security Council also notes with concern evidence of growing links between the insurgency and the drug trade in the south of Afghanistan.

"The Security Council welcomes the efforts of the International Security Assistance Force and other partners to train and mentor the Afghan national security forces. The Security Council welcomes the establishment of the Afghan-led International Police Coordination Board to enhance coordination and increase effectiveness in this area, which is central to the process of empowerment of the Afghan Government. The Security Council also welcomes the deployment, beginning on 15 June, of the European Union police mission in Afghanistan (EUPOL Afghanistan).

"The Council stresses the importance for the stability of the country and the region of finding viable solutions for Afghan refugees, in particular for their voluntary, safe and orderly return and sustainable reintegration in

Afghanistan, and calls for continued and enhanced international cooperation and assistance in this regard.

"The Security Council encourages relevant national and international actors to develop increased operational synergies, taking due account of their respective roles and responsibilities. The Security Council emphasizes in this regard the central role played by the JCMB in coordinating international assistance, while preserving Afghan ownership, and encourages further efforts to promote a more coherent international engagement.

"The Security Council appreciates the continued efforts by the Secretary-General and his Special Representative to ensure the full implementation of the mandate of UNAMA, as established by its resolution 1662 (2006) and extended by resolution 1746 (2007), and looks forward to the further expansion of the Mission and its operations to key provinces across the country at the earliest opportunity."